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THE CROWN OF SORROW

BY HJALMAR HJORTH BOYSEN.

With original illustrations from life.



BINDING WREATHS IN THE ILEX GROVE.

“Joy is beautiful,
Joy is divine ;
The Crown of Joy,
May it ever be mine !”

sang Eusebia and Charis as they danced hand in hand under the ilex-trees.

At the cross-roads, at the edge of the grove, they seated themselves on the grass and plucked flowers which they twined into wreaths.

“What is your dearest wish, sister ?” asked Charis. “Of all things, what would you rather be ?”

“I would be a great singer,” answered Eusebia, “with power to move the very depths of the hearts of men.”

“You have stolen my wish,” Charis declared, gayly ; “that is the very thing I would be.”

As they were yet speaking Fate came to them and unwound from her spindle



READING MENANDER'S BOOK OF SONGS.

two threads. The one was smooth and shining bright, the other was rough, dark, and knotted. "These are the threads of your destiny," said Fate. "Choose!"

"But why not give us both bright and beautiful ones?" cried Charis.

"It is so ordained," Fate replied, "that joy is to be the portion of but one of you; sorrow that of the other."

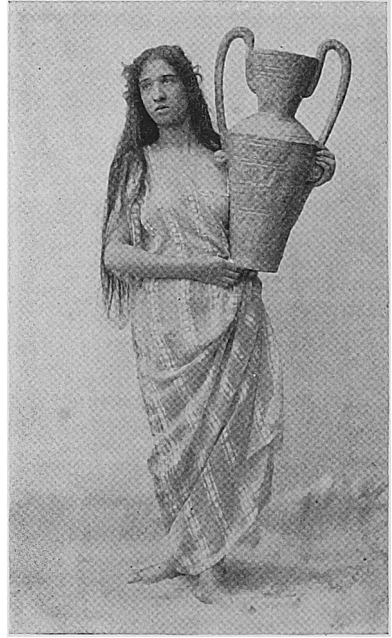
"Then give me this," Eusebia begged, seizing the dark and knotted thread, "in order that the other may be allotted to my sister."

"You have chosen," said Fate; "be it according to your desire."

"Oh, you dearly beloved one!" exclaimed Charis, flinging her arms about her sister's neck.

When they looked up Fate had vanished. But no sooner did Charis realize what had occurred than she was seized with a dim regret. Not that she wished that Eusebia had chosen differently, but she was vaguely uncomfortable at the thought of having so readily accepted her sacrifice.

When the sisters arrived at their father's house the sun was low and the pale



THE FUNERAL URN.



EUSEBIA WEEPS FOR MENANDER'S DEATH.



THEY CLUNG CLOSE TO HER SIDE.

of regret flitted through her mind, and she half divined the shallowness of the heart which knows but joy, and is closed to sorrow.

At the break of dawn Eusebia, accompanied by her sister, went forth to seek Fate, whom they found standing at the cross-roads in the ilex grove. They clung close to her side, imploring her to avert the doom that was hanging over Menander's head. But Fate answered sadly :

"You have chosen. The thread that is unwound can no more be forced back upon the spindle."

Then the two girls went away, and Eusebia was so overwhelmed with grief that she sank down upon the marble settee

crescent of the moon hung over the western olive groves. They sat down and waited for Eusebia's lover, the poet Menander ; and while they waited they turned the leaves of his book of songs and marveled at the beauty of his thought and the silvery current of his verse. But their hearts were heavy within them. A dark foreboding of calamity gathered like a cloud above their heads.

The night waned and the morrow came. Then a messenger arrived from Menander announcing that he was sick unto death. At these tidings Eusebia's heart was wrung with anguish, and she repented of her rash generosity. She went to her lover's house, and she groaned in spirit, half accusing herself of having slain him. Bitter tears did she weep, and Charis knelt at her feet and strove to comfort her. But for all that Charis felt half guilty, because she was not more profoundly moved. It was but the surface of her soul which was agitated, but in the depths there was a strange, cool calm. And again a shadow



CHARIS COMFORTS EUSEBIA.



THEY BESOUGHT HER TO SAVE MENANDER'S LIFE.

and wrung her hands in agony. Once more she went with Charis to the cross-roads. Both sisters fell upon their knees before the stern goddess of Fate and besought her to save the life of Menander. But even as they were imploring her, Fate vanished from their midst, and they knew that Menander was dead.

The next day the funeral pyre was lighted, and Eusebia brought a precious sculptured urn, adorned in low relief with emblems of life and death. She gathered the ashes of her beloved one in the urn and carried it to the vault where his fathers were buried. Again and again she sank under her burden. For three days and three nights she watched with other mourners at the tomb, sitting silent and tearless. Day-

light pierced her eyes like sharp needles. Life tasted like brass upon her palate.

On the evening of the third day Charis came, and at the sight of her lovely face, in which joy still lurked as behind a veil of sad propriety, the frost that had bound Eusebia's heart thawed; the hot tears gushed forth and a cry of anguish broke from her. It grew into a dirge of deep, soul-stirring pathos. It was Love's farewell to Death. The mourners sat wonder-stricken. The laborers in the neighboring field forsook their ploughs.

"Was ever such voice given to mortal?" said they. "Even the birds in the air and the stag at the pool pause to listen."

From that day life seemed fairer, ampler, more charged with beautiful meaning to those who heard Eusebia sing. In token of their gratitude, they ordered a golden laurel crown to be made; and as their spokesman pressed it upon her brow a glorious chorus burst forth:

"Joy is beautiful,
Joy is divine;
The Crown of Joy,
May it ever be thine!"

To which Eusebia responded, lifting up her voice with a grand and noble pathos:

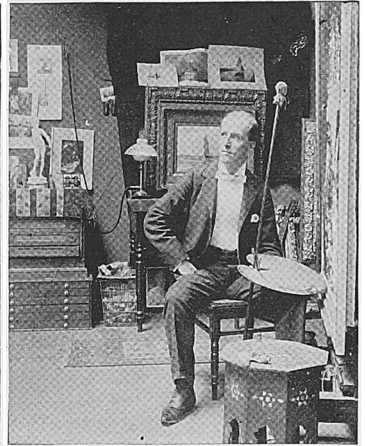
"Sorrow is beautiful,
Sorrow divine;
The Crown of Sorrow
Has ever been mine!"



EUSEBIA SINKS UNDER HER BURDEN.



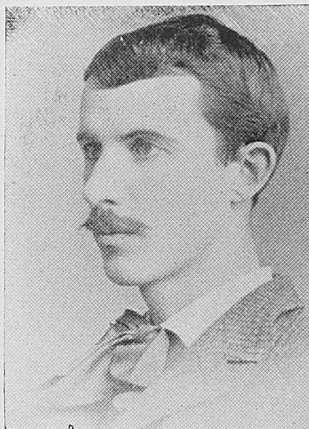
WALTER S. RUSSELL.



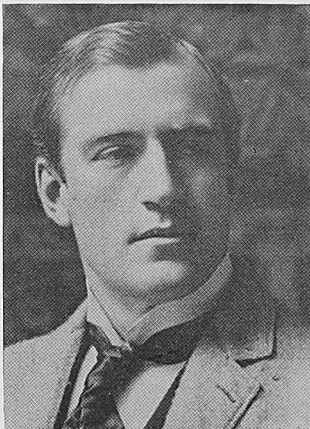
PARKER NEWTON.



HENRY SANDHAM.



HENRY C. WHITE.



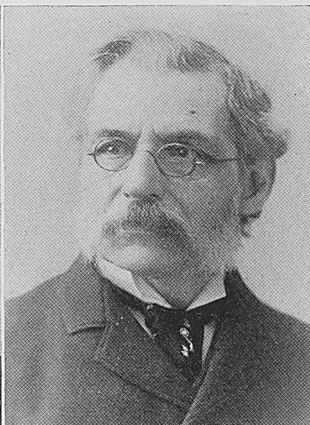
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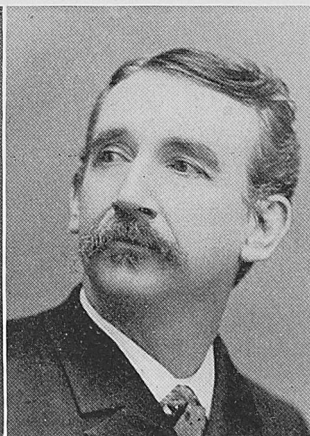
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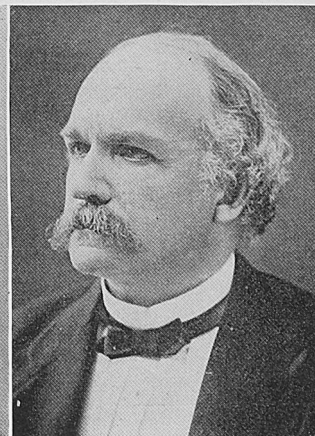
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G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.

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Drawn by James Carroll Beckwith.

GOOD-MORNING.